

Disaster Memorial Events

for increasing awareness and preparedness

Commemorating the 150th anniversary of the 1868 Arica tsunami, Aotearoa-New Zealand

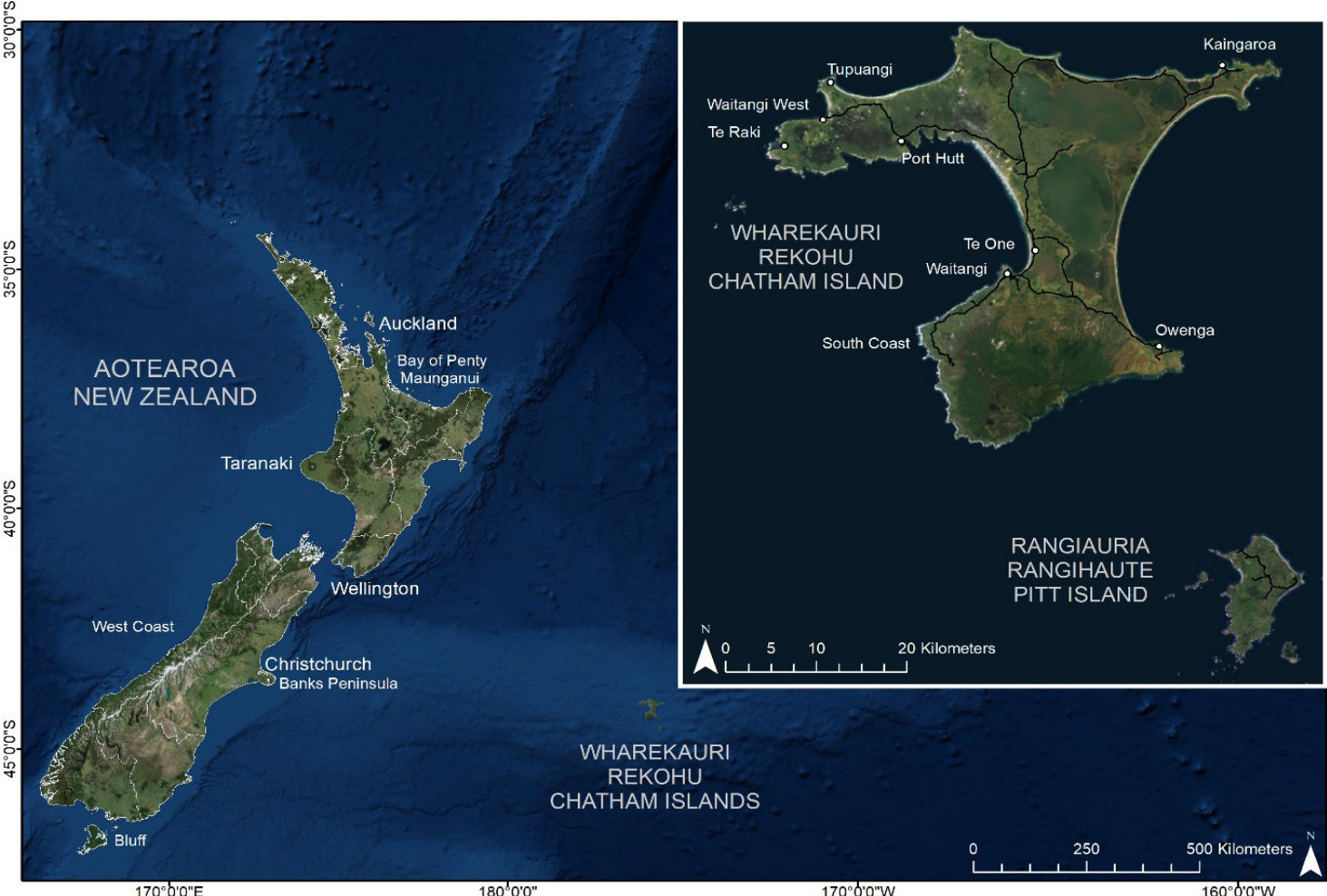
Context

- The 1868 Arica tsunami is Aotearoa-New Zealand's only deadly tsunami on post-colonial record.
- The Chatham Islands, was one of the worst affected locations in NZ. 6 m tsunami waves killed three whānau (as many as 30 people), destroyed buildings, infrastructure, impacted the environment, economy and the community.
- Social memory of this event and other tsunamis during our history has diminished.
- Disaster anniversaries are a time when people's memories and personal experiences are powerfully evoked, prompting recollection, reflection and storytelling (Forrest, 1993, Echterling, 1998).
- In 2018, a team of scientists, emergency managers and communication specialists collaborated to organise a memorial event on the Chatham Islands and co-ordinate a multi-agency media campaign to commemorate the 150th anniversary.
- The purpose was to raise awareness of the disaster and to encourage preparedness for future tsunami and provided an opportunity to promote recently developed tsunami evacuation zones and share new research.

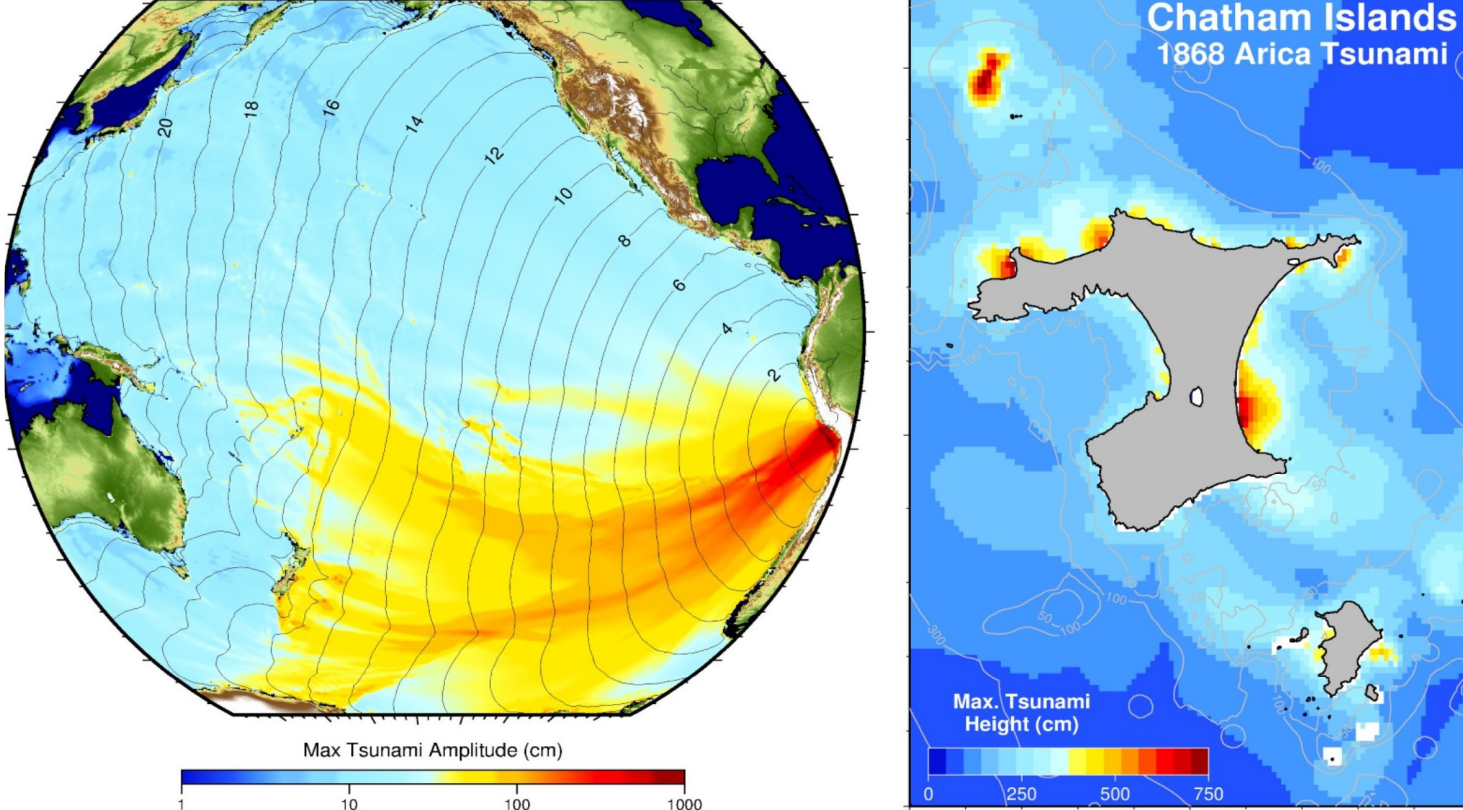
Outreach

- 3 Media releases
- 3 Magazine articles
- Social media promotion
- Geonet news story
- Newspaper article
- Council Website article
- Letters to ambassadors of Chile and Peru

Resources developed by the team for the memorial



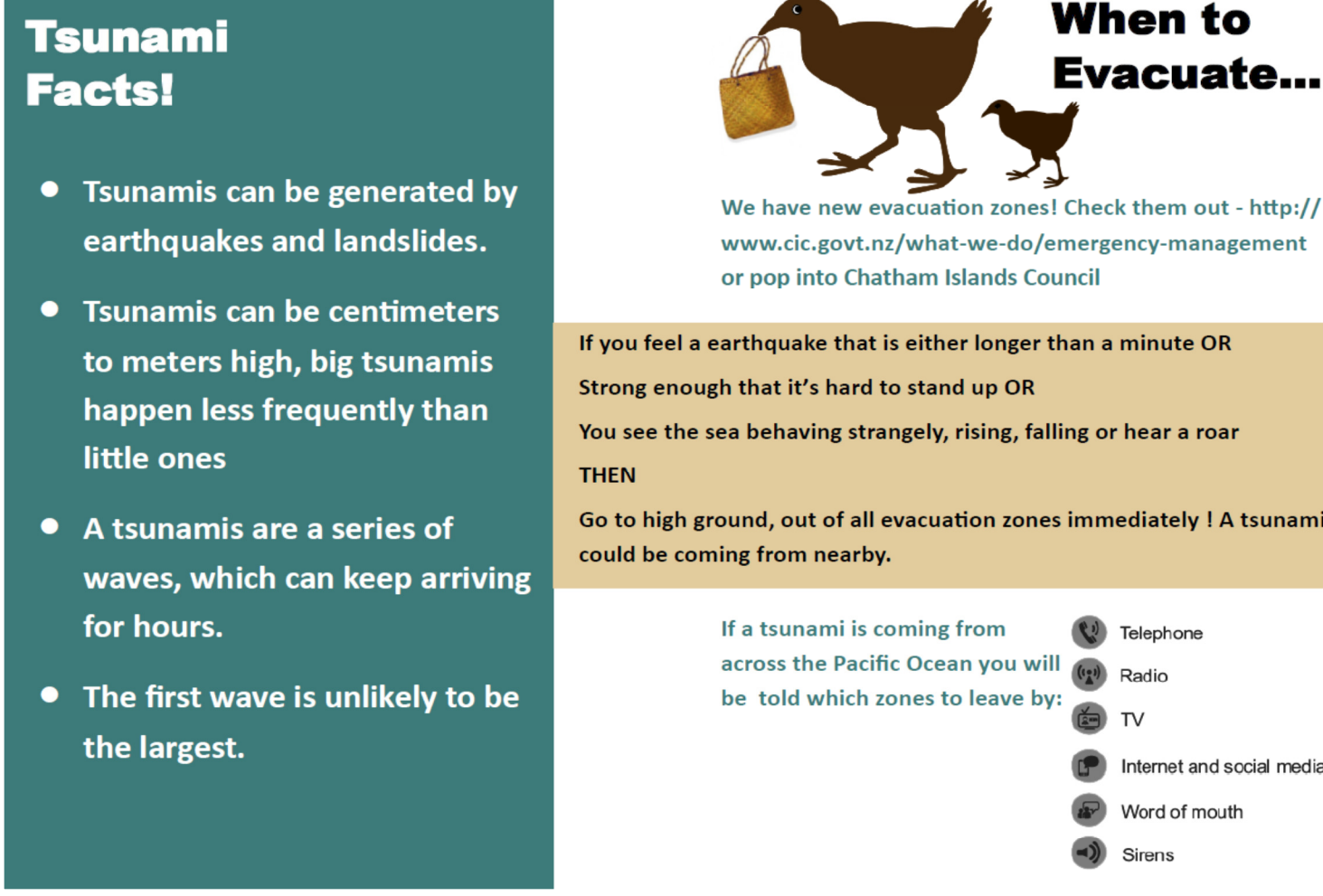
Map of the Chatham Islands



Animations produced by eCoast of the 1868 tsunami



Post card flyers produced by Emily to stick on the fridge



Back of post card with key evacuation messages



Chatham Islanders gather at Waitangi West to say a karakia



Kristie-Lee telling the story of the 1868 tsunami to school kids

The Memorial Event

- 0900 Community and Kaingaroa School gathers; karakia and introductory speeches outside the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in Waitangi.
- 0930 Depart in convoy on bus and various private vehicles.
- 1015 Stop vehicles and observe a minute of silence for those who lost their lives in the 1868 Arica earthquake and tsunami.
- 1045 Arrive at the south end of Waitangi West Beach; karakia and korero (discussion about how the tsunami impacted the island 150 years ago).
- 1200 Travel back to EOC.
- 1245 Sausage sizzle lunch at EOC.
- 1300 Presentation of new tsunami research, evacuation maps and preparedness tips.
- 1400 Presentation to Te One School with discussion, questions and a tsunami game; pupils mark where their homes are on evacuation maps; we distribute post-cards with key information about tsunamis for all families.

We found that...

The level of public engagement and media uptake during this campaign shows there is public appetite for commemorating disasters!

Disaster anniversaries provide a window of opportunity to communicate hazard, risk and resilience information through memorial events and media.

References

Echterling, L. G. 1998. *A year ago today: The psychology of a disaster's anniversary*, Virginia Disaster Stress Intervention Site.
Forrest, T. R. 1993. Disaster Anniversary: A Social Reconstruction of Time. *Sociological inquiry*, 63, 444-456.

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